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Myths of the Minstrel.



MYTHS
OF
THE MINSTREL.

BY
ESTELLE ANNA LEWIS,

AUTHOR OF "RECORDS OF THE HEART," "CHILD OF THE SEA," ETC.



NEW YORK:
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TO THOSE

Who love Romance and the Romancer,

WHETHER IN PROSE OR RHYME:

TO THOSE

WHO DARE TO LIFT THEIR SOULS FROM THE MATERIAL
TO THE SPIRITUAL,

These Poems are Inscribed;

WITH THE BEST EMOTIONS OF THE HEART

FROM WHICH THEY RECEIVED THEIR VITALITY.

ADVERTISEMENT.

THESE POEMS, with one or two exceptions, have been written since the publication of "CHILD OF THE SEA, AND OTHER POEMS."

The prosperous Voyages of the small Cargoes, which I have heretofore timidly intrusted to the Ocean of public opinion, have emboldened me, though not without misgiving, to send forth this little Craft of Trifles.

BROOKLYN, L. I., *May*, 1852.

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The Cruise of Aureana.

THE CRUISE OF AUREANA

AN ALLEGORY.¹

WHEN not a breath bespoke a gale,
And fair and blithely blew the breeze,
I weighed my anchor, trimmed my sail,
And spread it for Elysian seas.

Onward I sailed, by many a realm,
And many a spicy-breathing Isle,
With Cupid only at the helm,
My star and compass Psyche's smile.

The sea-maids by my shallop tripped,
Drinking of my inebriate bliss,
Old Neptune, rising briny-lipped,
Upon my brow impressed a kiss.

The warblers piped from hills and dells,
To greet me as I neared the strands,
The Lilies rung their snowy bells,
The wood-nymphs clapped their pearly hands.

Around me hung th' enamored hours,
From airy rifts that oped above me,
White fingers dropped celestial flowers,
The very stars did seem to love me :

And my ecstatic pulse did play
To silvery feet of roseate Blissess,
That danced around my Soul, which lay
Feeding upon aërial kisses.—

Anon, a sound came out from under
The wave, and smote my slumbering ear,
A voice croaked out, like muttering thunder,
“*Beware !* thou helpless mariner.”

Then up I started from my trance,
And gazed about my sea-borne lodge,

A cloud was in the blue expanse,
A shadow on my horologe.²

I watched the sleepy waves awake,
I watched the darkly gathering blast,
And knew, too well, its wrath would break
Upon my helpless head at last.

I saw it deepening dire and dark,
Yet prayed to God its steps to stay,
Till I could moor my struggling bark
Within some fair adjacent Bay :

But swift the Tempest strode the sky,
And stretched its wings from pole to pole,
Then bending low, with flashing eye,
Hung o'er me, like an angry Soul.--

Down bore it on me, fierce and fast,
But still I trusted to my Pilot,
To guide me safe before the blast,
And land me on some happy Islet.

I heard the breakers roar ahead,
I felt my little vessel shudder—
I called my Pilot—he had sped,
A fiend was standing at the rudder.

“Fear not, thou trembling mariner,”
With adder glance the demon said,
“’Tis but the howling blast ye hear,
The breakers they are far ahead.

“Fear not, thou trembling mariner,
Be not thy lip and cheek so pale,
Thy shallop safely I will steer,
And we shall soon outride the gale.

“Fear not—these moorings well I’ve tried,
And many a frail, dismasted bark
Have guided safely o’er this tide,
’Mid mist and murk—by day and dark.”

Then loud as trump of time, I heard
The storm-fiend ring his awful ’larum;

And then a whirlpool's jaws we neared—

It was the *Mare Tenebrarum*!

Dark rocks on rocks lay piled to heaven,

Midway their front an archway yawned,

Through which the struggling waves were driven

Into the boiling hell beyond.

Black as Plutonian midnight, there

Stood Fate, the dread portcullis lifting,—

And downward many a ruin rare,

Heart-freighted Argosy went drifting.

Virtue, with snowy pinions brailed—

Envy, with rankling venom bloated—

Beauty, with all her charms unveiled,

Like drift-wood down the rapid floated.

Now round and round my shallop whirled—

Then struggling lay as in a spasm—

I shrieked—the gloating demon curled

His lip, and pointed to the chasm.

I grasped the helm—and though too late,
Spurned back the fiend's exulting glance—
I called on heaven—I called on Fate—
They silent left me to my chance.

And now my bark, like frightened steed,
Back from the hissing portal wheeled—
Now forward leaped, with lightning speed—
Now downward, like a drunkard, reeled.

Gasping it lay—with ruthless arm,
The whirlpool clove its sides asunder—
An angel clasped my sinking form—
The demon and the boat went under.

THE ANGEL'S VISIT.

ONE December evening cold,
Filled with sorrows manifold,
To the sere and fallow wold
With an Elfin step I stole,
To hold converse with my soul,
Of the loved and lost of yore,
Dwelling on the shadowy shore—
The spirit shore.

Very lonely was my breast—
On that night no genial guest
By its hearth-stone paused to rest;
Dim the lamp of Hope did gleam
O'er my young heart's darkened stream;
And I sought from mystic store
In that lamp new oil to pour—
Fresh oil to pour.

Dark, and drear, and desolate,
On a mossy crag I sate,
Watching through the heavenly gate
Many a solemn angel-band
Marching to the spirit-land,
When Love tapping on the door
Of my heart, did there implore—
A home implore.

Trembling, shivering, timid-hearted,
From that holy dream I started,
As a ghost of the departed
From the gates of light had drifted,
And with icy fingers lifted
Up the latchet of the door
Of my doating heart once more—
Ah me ! once more !

Then aside I dashed the tear,
Lower bent my spirit's ear,
More distinct the taps to hear,
And all thoughtless did begin

To tell Love to enter in,
When an Angel sought this shore
To defeat him at the door—
My lone heart's door.

Low his golden tresses streaming
O'er his wings with soul-light beaming,
Perched he down amid my dreaming,
Perching, sat ere I could rise,
Gazing full into my eyes,
As my soul he would explore—
And this Cupid by the door—
My lone heart's door.

Calmly then the angel spoke,
Words that o'er my spirit broke,
Like the chimes in dream-land woke—
"Sad, meek solitaire of earth,
Loving, trusting from thy birth—
Soul that heavenward doth soar,
Turn this traitor from the door—
Thy lone heart's door.

“In thy breast he seeks no home,
From the blithest he will roam;
He will enter the heart's dome,
Filch its every jewel fair,
Plant his barbéd arrow there,
And then straight go out the door,
Back returning never more—
Ah! never more!

“Search the chronicles of Love,
See the nets that he has wove,
To entrap the timid Dove;
See in Lethe's crowded domes
Ashes of his hecatombs;
And I wot thou'lt keep the door
Of thy heart locked ever more—
For ever more.

“Blossoms in thy heart may bloom,
E'en while Love hath there his home,
But their roots are in the tomb;
And the tramp of funeral-feet

Lone thy spirit's ear will greet,
When too late to lock the door
Of thy heart for ever more—

Ah! ever more!

“Therefore, mournful child of song,
Leave Love to the heartless throng,
Who can cope with Wo and Wrong;
Pour thy soul's surcharge of fire
On an altar holier, higher,
And let Reason keep the door
Of thy fond heart ever more—

For ever more.”

When the Angel this had said,
Out his burnished wings he spread,
And above the tree-tops sped;
Upward, upward, where the moon
Floated in her cloudy noon,
Leaving me to guard the door
Of my heart for ever more—

Ah! ever more!

But this heart would not obey
What the missioned sprite did say—
It would have its wilful way ;
It made Love its chiefest guest,
Till he banished peace and rest,
When he straight went out the door,
Locking Wo in ever more—
Ah! ever more!

THE ORPHAN'S HYMN.

HERE'S the tomb of my father—how mournful the
thought!

That he went to the grave ere my infantile mind
One smile of parental affection had caught,
Or his lineaments dear in my heart were enshrined!
Yes, my sire! by thy dust I am kneeling in prayer,
Where in days of my childhood so oft I have wept,
Imploring thy spirit to soothe my despair,
And at evening and morning sweet vigils have kept.

Ere my young mind could grasp them, they told me
thy woes,

Of the virtues that bind thee for ever to me;
Of the love of thy friends, of the hate of thy foes;
That in features and mind I was like unto thee;
And with dawning of thought is thy memory wove,

The grief and the pining that prey on my breast ;
The longing to soar to thy dwelling above,
And repose in thy arms in the land of the blest.

I have never seen parents their children caress,
Or soothe into quiet their heart-breathing sighs,
When the storms of misfortune around them did press,
But the tears of affection arose to mine eyes :
I have ne'er met a maid by the side of her sire,
Or beheld in the festal a father who kept
Watch over his daughter and seemed to admire
His lovely and beautiful charge, but I've wept.

My mother lies by him—blessed saint of the skies !
Remembrance returns thee—how gentle and meek !
I behold thee when youth filled with radiance thine
eyes,
And beauty and health were illuming thy cheek ;
When thy delicate form was elastic as air,
When thy bosom was white as the Parian's glow,
When thy beautiful ringlets of long, flowing hair,
In sable threads sprinkled thy forehead of snow.

How solemn, dear Mother ! it seems, that the elay,
Relentless and cold, now eneumbers the breast,
Where, all helpless, so oft I in infancy lay,
And, soothed by thy lullaby, sobbed me to rest ;
That on earth I shall never behold thee again,
Never more feel thy rosy lips pressing my brow,
Or thy fairy hand smoothing my pillow of pain,
Thy affection and love must for ever forego.

My sister sleeps next—lovely blossom of heaven !
Ah ! why wast thou summoned so early away ?
Why so soon was the bond of our sisterhood riven,
And I left alone on the cold earth to stay ?
Why wast thou not spared to delight and to cheer
My desolate heart 'mid depression and gloom ;
With thy love-breathing counsels to gladden my ear ;
With thy songs and thy smiles to enliven my home ?

Sleep on, ye beloved ! it is better to rest
In the halls of the dead, than to linger in life,
Where the brain and the bosom with pain are oppressed,
And the soul is beleaguered by sorrow and strife.

Sleep on! though no blossoms your homes are per-
fuming,

There are calmness and freedom from discord and
care,

The lovely and beautiful daily are coming—

And in my pale vesture I soon shall be there.

THE PRISONER OF PEROTÉ.³

IN the prison of Peroté
 Silently the warrior sate,
With his eye bent sadly downward,
 Like one stricken sore by Fate ;
Broken visions of his glory
 Quick before his spirit passed,
Like clouds athwart the summer heaven
 Hurtled by the blast.
The sullen booming of the cannon,
 And the clasp of blade and spear—
Death, death unto the tyrant !
 Still were ringing in his ear.
Much he sorrowed for the people,
 For whose weal he fain would die—
On the tablets of the future,
 Sadly fell his eye.

There he saw his weeping country
Close beleaguered by the foe,
Saw her chained, and faint, and bleeding,
Heard her shieks of woe ;
From the eastward and the westward,
He beheld the pilgrims come
To muse upon her wild ruins,
As now they flock to Rome.
Then in thought afar he wandered
Unto Andalusia's^s shore,
To the cities of Abdallah,
And the valiant Campeador ;
To the dark land of the Paynim,
Mecca's consecrated shrine,
To Palmyra of the desert,
And to Palestine.
Well he weighed the fate of nations,
Well their glory and their shame,
Well the fleetness of all Power,
Well the emptiness of Fame ;
Well the wasting wrecks of empires,
Choking Time's impatient stream,

Till Beauty's gentle whispers
Awoke him from his dream.

“Arouse thee, gallant soldier!”
In a heavenly voice she cried,
“Though forsaken by all others,
I am hovering by thy side;
Though thine own heroic valor
Turned against thy breast the dart,
As the feather of the Eagle
Guides the arrow to his heart;
Though the tempest wildly rages,
Though the sky is dread and dark,
Steadfast keep thine eye on Heaven,
And God will guide thy bark.
Sorrow not! attendant angels
Thee to Fate will ne'er resign,
Soon the storm will all pass over,
Soon the sun will shine—
Sorrow not! the proud and lofty,
Sun and sky I've left for thee,
E'en a dungeon in thy presence

Is a throne to me.
Every gleam of thy affection,
Every glance of thy dark eyes
Deep into my aching bosom
Pours a paradise ;
And for ever, as the flower,
Far away from pleasure's sight,
Close beside some stately Ruin,
Sheds its holy light :
As the faithful woodbine twineth
Still around the mouldering tree,
So, to cheer thy desolation,
Will I cling to thee."

My Study.

MY STUDY.

I.

THIS is my world—my angel-guarded shrine,
Which I have made to suit my heart's great need,
When sorrow dooms it overmuch to bleed :
Or, when aweary and athirst I pine
For genial showers and sustenance divine ;
When Love, or Hope, or Joy my heart deceive,
And I would sit me down alone to grieve—
My mind to sad or studious mood resign.
Here oft, upon the stream of thought I lie,
Floating whichever way the waves are flowing—
Sometimes along the banks of childhood going,
Where all is bud, and bloom, and melody,
Or, wafted by some stronger current, glide,
Where darker frown the steeps and deeper flows
the tide.

II.

YES, 'tis my Cáabá—a shrine below,
Where my Soul sits within its house of clay,
Listing the steps of angels come and go—
Sweet missioned Heralds from the realms of day.
One brings me rays from Regions of the sun,
One comes to warn me of some pending dart,
One brings a laurel leaf for work well done,
Another, whispers from a kindred Heart.—
Oh ! this I would not change for all the gold
That lies beneath the Sacramento's waves,
For all the Jewels Indian coffers hold,
For all the Pearls in Oman's starry caves—
The lessons of all Pedagogues are naught
To those I learn within this holy Fane of thought.

III.

HERE blind old Homer teaches lofty song ;

The Lesbian sings of Cupid's pinions furled,
And how the heart is withered up by wrong;
Dante depicts an infernal world,
Wide opening many a purgatorial aisle;
Torquato rings the woes of Palestine,
Alphonso's rage, and Leonora's smile—
Love, Beauty, Genius, Glory all divine;
Milton depaints the bliss of Paradise,
Then flings apart the ponderous gates of Hell,
Where Satan on the fiery billow lies,
“With head uplift,” above his army fell,—
And Avon's Bard, surpassing all in art,
Unlocks the portals of the human heart.

/4

IV.

TO THE GENIUS OF LITERATURE.

[A STATUETTE ON THE MANTEL IN MY STUDY.]

THY little foot uplifted on thy knee,
Thine eyes intently bent upon thy book,
As in a transcendental Revery,
Ne'er deigning round my study-room to look,

There thou dost mutely sit from day to day,
Lost in the dreamy realm of Fantasy.
Yet o'er my heart thou hold'st a mighty sway,
And sagest lessons dost impart to me
Of Art, and Beauty, and the wealth of Lore ;
The unfathomable seas of mind and love ;
The meed for lofty effort held in store,
Till Aspiration lifts my soul above,
And I am drunk in intellectual joy—
My charming, beautiful, mute marble Boy.

V.

TO THE GENIUS OF ART.

[A STATUETTE ON THE MANTEL.]

THOU art a Beam from God—the brightest Ray
That Heaven hath earthward sent to cheer the soul
And animate it in its house of clay,
With dreams of light, and life, and Glory's goal.
Here, mutely worshipping, I gaze on thee,
Till nascent haloes dawn around thy brow

And from the portals of eternity,
The laurelled Dead, returning, round thee bow.
There bent o'er Farnarina's sainted face,
Feeding his soul, eternal Raphael kneels,
As if in its pale hues he still can trace
Beauty, surpassing all that Heaven reveals :
Angelo—Titian—all the immortal Great,
Glide in and at thy feet for inspiration wait.

VI.

TO HEBE.

[A STATUETTE ON THE BOOK-CASE.]

GODDESS of Beauty, and eternal youth !
Stray spark from Eden, ere the serpent came,
And fastened on the human Heart his tooth,
And earth assumed a different hue and name !
Lovely Ideal ! Beatific Beam !
For which Canova made a house of clay !
No more thou art to me a Poet's dream.
Such life and light thou shed'st upon my way,

Such living freshness breath'st upon the flowers
That droop beside the fountain of my soul—
So much dost speak of Bacchanalian hours,
How proudly thou did'st bear the nectar bowl,
How one ill step o'erwhelmed thee with disgrace,
And Ganymedes won thy high celestial place.

VII.

TO A BUST OF HOMER.

[STANDING ON MY DESK.]

HOMER, thou art not dead ! Thou canst not die
While beats one heart on this terrestrial sphere,
That ever felt the spell of Poesy,
Or Fancy's smile illume its chambers drear.
Three thousand Years have watched thy steady light
Guiding the minstrel Band to Fame's high goal,
As Cynosura through the treacherous night,
Directs the mariner o'er the dangerous shoal.
Those filmy orbs emmove with Genius' fire ;
Those pale lips speak from out the mighty past,

Of Helen's beauty, and Achilles' ire,
And Ilium's tears, and sighs, and struggles vast,
Until I hear the Grecian shouts resound,
And Troy's proud walls come tumbling to the ground.

VIII.

TO MY BOOKS.

HALLOWED companions! tutors! ministers!
To ye I bring my overburdened heart,
Bare its deep wounds with many sighs and tears,
And bless ye while ye soothe its burning smart.
If Falsehood, Envy, Hate, or Death surround me,
Ye fortify, and make my spirit strong—
If Sickness fling her pallid mantle round me,
Ye speed the weary winged hours along;
If Pleasure lure me to the festive hall—
Nature too long detain me by the brink,
Ye, like kind, watchful parents, gently call
Me hither, at your sapient founts to drink.—
Oh! who would spurn the shrine which wisdom
tends—

Oh ! who could fail to love such pure and constant
Friends !

IX.

TO MY GUITAR.

SO DEAR a friend as thou I never knew—
Such truth, and faith, and love, and sympathy
From evanescent hearts I never drew,
As I have drawn from thy soul-melody.
When I am sad thou chant'st some Paynim story
Until my woe is lost in woes of eld ;
When I am glad thou sing'st of knightly glory,
Till heart and brain in magic spell are held.
And here, all day, thy voice my spirit drinks,
While reeling Rapture steals along my veins,
Till every pulse inebriated sinks
Beneath the power of thy delicious strains :
And softly beatific harp-notes roll,
And Seraphs sing around the altars of my soul.

X.

THE OASIS.

THINK not, that I am helpless, ye who read
The pensive numbers of my fervent Lyre ;
That in the heart are sown some upas-seed,
Is not to prove all healthful germs expire.
That in a garden are some withered bowers,
Crisped buds and yellow leaves bestrew the ground
Is not to prove it hath nor herbs nor flowers.
Think not because I've stood on every round
Of Fortune's ladder, that no oasis
Amid the desert of my heart upglows
Above the sands and sallow cypresses,
Cheering the weary Pilgrim as he goes ;
Not all the fires that rend volcanic wombs
Can kill this one green spot that 'mid my heart-
waste blooms.

XI.

JOYS OF INTELLECTUAL EMPLOYMENT.

'Tis true I'm poor in what the world calls bliss ;
'Tis true I have known many wounds of pride,
With which a weaker nature might have died.
'Tis true I've passed woe's fearful charybdis,
Yet 'mid the maelstrom thrilled with happiness.
We should not murmur 'gainst an earthly trial—
It throws a stronger sunlight on life's dial,
Awakes the spirit in its chrysalis,
And plumes it i'to the broad, bright heavens to
soar.—

O God ! if I could sing the bliss I've known,
While sitting in this study-room alone,
Listing the soul-waves wash the eternal shore ;
If I could ring it out in one loud song,
'Twould shake the throne of Grief and banish
Wrong.

Sonnets from the Italian.



SONNETS FROM THE ITALIAN.

EMMALINA TO ADHÉMAR^s.

I.

LOVE'S POWER.

LIFE had no God-light—Earth no glory till
I heard the footsteps of thy Soul, and felt
Thine eyes on me like tropic sunbeams melt,
Infusing warmth through all my frame—a thrill
Of fire, that banished cold, and ice, and chill;
Then Beauty on the face of all things dwelt,
And folding up its hands my Spirit knelt,
Drinking of omnipresent love its fill.
My senses of the weight of clay were purged,
Till I could peer o'er in the Spirit-world
On countless souls alit with pinions furled,
Giving me gaze for gaze. With becks they urged

Me to o'erstep the bounds 'tween Life and Death,
Drawing me towards them till Soul took away my
breath.

II.

ITS ANGELHOOD.

I NEVER felt my angelhood till thou,
Beloved Adhémar, bent thine eyes on me ;
I never felt my Soul's divinity,
And all its strength of pinion until now.
Thou'st taught it, like a new-fledged bird to soar
Out on the borders of the aërial shore
Beyond the realm of storm, and sleet, and snow ;
And poise with thee upon Heaven's starry brow.
Arm locked in arm—wing lapping over wing—
Lip pressed to lip in sensuous, soft embrace,
Our Spirits float illimitable space,
Sweeping the worlds of high imagining,
Drinking of beauty—love from wells divine,
Until they all forget that Spirits can untwine.

III.

ITS TENACITY.

WHILOME I wept, but they were tears of woe—
And now I weep, but they are tears of bliss,
Such as from Angels' eyes fall when they kiss
In Heaven, and thrill with an ecstatic glow.
For thee, beloved Adhémar, sweet tears flow,
When I remember all thy great love is,
And how it brought me out of grief's abyss
Into a port where winds nor tempests blow.
As two bright Rainbows sit above the clouds,
Vested in beauty that all beauty cheers,
Serenely smiling through their radiant tears,
So sit our Souls 'bove all that mist enshrouds ;
And constant as the twin stars walk the sky
Must they thus clasped revolve through Love's
eternity.

IV.

ITS COLOR.

I CAN nor tell nor sing the bliss of loving,
It is a joy to think of—not to speak,
Words, Symbols, Lyres, Seraphic Trumpets are too
 weak
To utter its divinity—so proving
That silence is its best interpreter.
Love never did gain strength through speech or ear;
If found loquacious, it is plumed for roving,
Or lodged in bosoms little worth its moving.
All things assume the color of my love,
I only see through its prismatic eyes.
It vests the stars in hues of Paradise,
And clothes the moon in Soulshine from above—
If sun, moon, stars went out—earth were black night,
I could live on and love by Love's celestial light.

V.

THE CHANGE.

AH! wo is me! how have I fallen from
This height—my Heaven of Heavens—my Eden fair,
Down to this lower world of Grief—Despair,
To trail the dust, like any other worm!
Where are my wings that erst outsoared the storm,
As the bold Eagle cleaves the upper air?
Where are the Sylphs that twined my flowing hair,
'Trancing me till they spoke their loving warm?
Ah! where the Soul, whose pinions under mine,
Did waft me up against the glowing stars,
Or with me float upon their silvery spars
Along the wide empyrean blue.—Supine
I lie, adrift adown the dreary dark,
Where dawns no Beacon-star to guide my helmless
Bark.

VI.

THE TIME WE MET.

It was the time of vernal bud and blossom,
When blushing Flora roved by wood and lea,
Breathing perfume from her ambrosial bosom,
Fresh palpitating from the Deity ;—
When pearly-footed brooklets down the vale,
Went leaping into ocean's calm embrace ;
And sweet-voiced fountains sang in every dale,
As glad to leave their ice-bound hiding place,
And bask in April's renovating noon ;
When from a thousand wind-harps music burst,
And my young heart with nature was in tune,
That I beheld thee, dear Adhémar, first,
And from Love's quiver sped the fatal dart
That held, and holds transfixed my bleeding heart.

VII.

THE PARTING.

'Tis just one year ago, beloved, to-day,
Since, my pale hand between thy hands compressed,
I laid my burning brow upon thy breast,
And bade the flood-gates of my heart give way,
Then shut them down upon its streams for aye.
We sought to speak, yet neither said farewell;
Fate rang her larum through my spirit's cell
Until the chill of Death upon me lay.—
I never could re-live that hour again,
Through every artery shot an icy pang,
As if an adder pierced me with its fang,
And dashed the roseate fount of life with bane—
Mine eyes were open, yet I could not see—
I breathed, yet I was dead—all things were dead to me.

VIII.

ADIEU.

ADIEU—adieu! In silent tears we parted
To journey on, diverging as two beams
That from the equatorial line have started,
Bending their faces towards the earth's extremes.
All day my bosom heaves with heavy sighs—
All day I sing thy favorite songs and weep—
All night I gaze into thy luminous eyes,
Or clasp thy shadow in my feverish sleep.—
Oh! for the love that was for Death too strong!
Oh! for the sweet-charmed Hours that sped too soon,
When thou didst steal from Beauty's laughing throng,
To meet me by the soft consenting Moon,
Inclasp my hand in tremulous delight,
And bend on me thine eyes angelically bright.

IX.

ONENESS.

NEVER in Earth or Heaven canst thou be loved
As I have loved thee—never—never more
By love so holy can thy soul be moved,
Upon terrestrial or celestial shore.
On thee alone my faithful Spirit dwelt—
To thee alone my restless Fancy soared,
For thee alone before my God I knelt,
And the libations of my full heart poured.
Thy smiles, thy words, each feature of thy face,
Thy step, as thou didst from me last depart—
Thy mournful gait—thy form's majestic grace,
Were caught and treasured in my doating heart,
And there have lived through every varying mood,
The soul and solace of my sainted solitude.

X.

REMEMBRANCE.

THY voice flows o'er my list'ning heart like sound
From fairy fount or lute in land of Dreams,
And full thy loveliness upon me teems,
With thy bright presence lighting all around,
Until my pulses leap like rills unbound.
I see again thine eyes' effulgent beams ;
I walk with thee along the laughing streams,
Through whispering grove—o'er flower-bespangled
ground,
And feel thy glowing touch my heart-strings thrill,
As I upon thy doating arm recline,
Listing thee speak from out thy spirit's shrine,
Love-freighted words, whose heavenly music still
Steals softly o'er my weary, thirsting soul,
Exerting o'er it aye a calm and sweet control.

XI.

THE RETURN.

I SEE again thy tall, majestic form,
E'en with the vividness of the first sight ;
I see thine eyes, like stars amid the night
Of my deep woe—I feel thy heart beat warm
Against my heart—I feel thy tremulous arm
Inclasp my waist—and lip to lip impressed,
I feel the sweet flame kindling in my breast,
And stealing o'er my soul the fatal charm.—
O memory ! thou art, alas, too true !
Too faithful to this desolate heart of mine,
Whose innermost recess is sorrow's shrine !
I would forget the past—and seek anew
Some other votary—some alluring scene,—
But ever thy dear form, Adhémar, floats between.

XII.

THE SPELL.

THY presence dwells around, above, below,
On all things lovely and most beautiful,
I hear thy voice in every fountain's flow—
Behold thy smile on every flower I cull
Along the hills, and vales, and gliding streams;—
I see thine eyes' soft hues in the blue heaven—
Thy brow's bright radiance in the iris' beams—
Thy mind in the calm pensiveness of even.
The tuneful birds, the rills, the rustling trees—
The beings of the air—the stars—the moon—
All sounds, and tones, and stirring melodies—
And aught with which my spirit doth commune
In heaven, or earth, or space, or thought, to me
Hold eloquent discourse, adoréd one, of thee.

XIII.

I THINK OF THEE.

I THINK of thee till all is dim confusion,
And Reason reels upon her fragile throne—
The past and present blend in strange illusion—
Thoughts, feelings, all commingle into one,
As streams and rills into the ocean run,
And my pale cheeks are drenched with a suffusion
Of drops upheaved from lava-founts of woe ;
And while these burning tides my lids o'erflow,
Impassioned Fancy to thy presence hies,
And suns her in the radiance of thine eyes—
At the pure well-spring of thy bosom sips,
And feeds upon the nectar of thy lips,
Then back, with gathered sweets, returns to me,
As homeward comes at eve the honey-freighted bee.

XIV.

BURIED YEARS.

YEARS have been tombed, Adhémar, since we met,
Sorrow and change have brooded o'er my way—
Thine image floated o'er me night and day,
Like some lone-wandering star that could not set.
I've sought in other climes for other friends
To quench the fire that on love's altar burns
For ever: But to thee my spirit tends
Constant as magnet to Alru'ba⁶ turns.
Beneath the stars I've wrapped me up in dreams,
And talked with phantoms till the morning light;
I have run races with the laughing streams,
And sung with birds from early dawn till night,
To wean my heart and win my thoughts from thee--
But thou wert still my star, my sun, my Deity.

XV.

THE FAILURE.

LONG have I left the world, each dazzling scene
Of Joy and Mirth and hall of Gaiety,
To seek in solitude tranquillity,
If soul so tost can ever be serene ;
From vulgar eyes my bosom's woe to screen,
And strive, beloved one, if such thing can be,
To rend the chain that binds my life to thee—
All tears and pinings banish—and again
To mingle in the world as proud and gay.
But here, week after week, and year I stay
Feeding my heart upon its hoarded sighs—
The memory of thy form and radiant eyes,
Which woke the plaintive spirit of my Lyre,
And kindled in my breast a never dying fire.

XVI.

THE RESIGNATION.

A THOUSAND times I've vowed to say farewell—
A thousand times that word's died on my lip—
A thousand times resolved no more to sip
The cup, in which delicious poison dwells.
A thousand times I've striven the storm to quell
That in this desolated breast doth rave,
And sworn to cool my heart in Lethe's wave—
Against all bonds of Cupid to rebel ;
But such resolves like morning mist depart,
And, like Prometheus on his rocky peak,
Writhing beneath the Eagle's slakeless beak,
I feel the vulture gnawing at my heart ;
And to its fangs my bosom have resigned,
Till death in mercy shall my chain unbind.

Miscellaneous Poems.

LOVE'S FIRST KISS.

I NEVER treasured up this kiss,
And fainly now would it forget,
But, with its rapturous thrill of bliss,
My heart, pulse, brain are throbbing yet.

Revelling it lies upon my lips,
Imbibing all their dewy showers,
As honey-bee the nectar sips,
From out the rosy lips of flowers.

And other thirsting kisses come
To claim their share of nectar too,
But, with his little roseate plume,
He drives them from his cup of dew.

O Cupid! take thy kiss again!

Bid it from off my lip depart,

'Tis sipping life from every vein,

Its beak is fastened on my heart.

LINES ON A VASE OF FLOWERS.

[FOUND ON MY DESK.]

I GAZE upon these simple flowers
As something I revere ;
They grew in love's enchanted bowers—
And Love hath placed them here.

I kiss their cheeks of virgin bloom,
I press their dewy lips,
While my rapt soul of their perfume,
Inebriated sips.

I look into their violet eyes,
And feel my heart grow calm,
And fancy I'm in Paradise,
Inhaling Eden's balm.

There in ecstatic dreams I rove
 Among celestial bowers,
Weaving a garland for my love,
 Of beatific flowers.

LINES ON SOME VIOLETS.

[LEFT UPON MY DESK WHILE I WAS AT A FUNERAL.]

HE brought these violets yester-eve,
While I was with the dead,
And when I hither came to grieve,
To me they meekly said :

“ Let not thy gentle heart-founts flow
For her who is at rest,
But joy and sing for all who go
To sit among the blest.

“ Weep for thyself, and not for her—
Child of melodious Grief!
And pray thy Angels, hovering near,
To make life's journey brief.

“For, now we hear thy spirit beat,
 With bleeding plumes, its grate,
And treading with impatient feet,
 Like one that could not wait.

“Like one, who, pale 'mid dungeon gloom,
 Paces his scanty floor,
Awaiting till the jailor come
 To ope his prison-door.”

THE KISS.

Two lovely beings near me stood,
The one a tall and blooming youth :
The other, in sweet maidenhood,
All wreathed with smiles, and love, and truth.

He gazed upon her beaming face
As if his soul lay mirrored there,
Then drew her close to his embrace—
But shrinking back, she said, “ *Take care !*”

“It never gave me joy,” he sighed,
“The dew from saintly lips to sip—
I’d rather quaff the lava-tide
That flushes Passion’s burning lip.”

“ *Then go,*” she said ; “ *I spurn thy kiss ;*
 Go, kneel at glowing Venus’ shrine,
And drink thy fill of wanton bliss—
 Thy lip shall never feed on mine.”

TO ONE AFAR.

THIS lovely morn—this lovely morn,
Ah ! whither are thy footsteps straying ;
Beneath what bowers of blooming thorn,
Art thou, in pensive mood, delaying ?

This lovely morn—this lovely morn,
Ah ! whither do thy bright thoughts wander—
What absent loved-one dost thou mourn ?
On what blessed Image dost thou ponder ?

This lovely morn, when all is fair,
And beautiful as Eden's Bowers,
Why have I not thy tender care—
Thy smiles to cheer the weary hours ?

Why have I not thy kisses warm ?
Why am I not beside thee walking,
And leaning on thy doating arm,
While all the woods of love are talking ?

But here, alone, I sit and kiss
Thine Image with the tears upstarting,
And watch afar, my dream of bliss,
Like the mirage of the waste departing.

TO A WHIP-POOR-WILL.

[SINGING IN A GRAVE-YARD.]

WHY, melancholy singer,
Dost thou hover here at eve,
Like one who loves to linger
Around the dead and grieve ?
Why, in the night-time only
Do we hear thy pensive lay ?
Why art thou ever lonely ?
Why shun'st the garish day ?

Art thou minstrel lorn from heaven,
Who comest to our earth,
At the silent hour of even,
To mock the voice of mirth ;

And to soothe the sad and weary
Who steal away to weep,
In the church-yard lone and dreary,
Or by the mountain steep?

Art thou spirit of a maiden
That restless roam'st the air,
With sorrow heavy-laden,
And breathing thy despair?
Or one loved, but long departed,
That nightly dost draw near,
To soothe the broken-hearted,
Who are weeping, pining here?

I know not, solemn singer,
What thy deep grief may be,
Nor why thou here dost linger,
But oft thou seem'st like me—
A lonely one each morrow,
Apart from all the throng,
Whose deep and hidden sorrow
Bursts forth in plaintive song.

THE FIRST SHIP TO AMERICA.

LIKE a dream of eld the forest lay
All in its beautiful, wild array :
The groves were clad in their summer sheen,
The Wood-nymphs danced upon the green,
And rill and stream with blithe emotion,
Went singing, leaping to the ocean.
The sinking sun on the deep sea gazed
Till his red eye with mist was dazed ;
The youthful moon her spyglass raised
The strange, mysterious craft to view,
That o'er the Indian waters flew ;
The savage left his wigwam-door,
And stood amazed upon the shore—
“ What may it be ? ” the red man cried,
“ That flaps its white wings o'er the tide ? ”

What may it be ! a huge canoe,
Sent by the great Chemanitou ?
Are those the souls of Indian races
Returning with white lily faces ?—
They are ! they are !” and to the strand
He flew with a brother’s outstretched hand—
But ah ! no brother’s hand he pressed—
He clasped the serpent to his breast.

WE SAT DOWN BY THE WATERS AND WEPT.

WE sat down by the waters and wept,
And thought on the days of our pride,
Ere the spoiler o'er Salem had swept,
Or freedom to her was denied;
We pondered, O Zion ! the time,
When thy glory undimmed we beheld,
And loud through the portals sublime
The tide of our minstrelsy swelled.

We suspended our harps on the willow,
That was waving o'er Babel's cool tide,
And we bathed our hot feet in the billow—
To the God of the Hebrew we cried ;

We recounted our sufferings o'er,
Our moaning we sent on the gale,
Till valley, and mountain, and shore,
Resounded with Israel's wail.

In the midst of our weary behests
To be ransomed from bondage and wrong,
While we smote our disconsolate breasts,
Of us they demanded a song ;
But in bonds may we ever be led—
Tenfold be the weight of our woe,
May this right hand fall withered and dead
Ere our songs for the tyrant shall flow !

THE MEXICAN EXPRESS.

[DURING THE LATE WAR.]

HUSHED is the cannon's deafening roar
On Palo Alto's plain ;
The raven flaps his dark wing o'er
The mountains of the slain—
“Huzza! huzza! a victory!”
Ten thousand tongues are crying,
And through the sulph'rous canopy
The stars and stripes are flying.
Northward the waves of joyance roll,
Setting the world in motion,
As, when towards the boreal Pole,
Fierce Auster rolls the ocean.

Triumph fills high her golden chalice,

Bonfires greet glory's ear,

As the Aurora Borealis

Welcomes some new-born star.

Prattlers their little voices strain

To swell the jubilee ;

The Ethiop forgets his chain,

And shouts—" *a victory !*"

But hark ! hear ye no notes of woe

Upswelling through this glee,

Like those sad undertones that flow

From out the frothing sea ?

Hear ye no hollow wails of strife—

No gentle heart-strings breaking—

Ah ! hear ye not the waves of life

Soul-freighted barks forsaking ?

Look on this altar of the heart,

By Susquehannah's river,

Where swift th' Express hath sped a dart

From out his teeming quiver ;

And smote the breast of age with grief,

The pulse of childhood bound,
And Beauty like an autumn leaf
Hurl'd lifeless on the ground.
The shouts of "*victory!*" rend the sky,
As on the Herald speeds—
O God! O God! what mockery
To souls in funeral weeds!

The sun no more will shine for them,
No beacon lure o'er land or flood—
Love's flowers lie withered on their stem,
Their star hath set in blood;
For far upon yon Mexic plain,
Where hungry vultures hover,
Reposes 'mid the uncoffined slain,
The Patriot—Husband— Lover.

And this is what the world calls Glory,
A nation's chivalry;
The deeds that are to live in story.—
Fame's immortality!

MELODIANA'S DREAM.

[AN EPISODE FROM AN UNPUBLISHED POEM.]

I STAND alone upon the shores of Time !
No longer Love hath any Circe Art
To bind my soul, that in its grief sublime,
Sits brooding o'er the ruins of my heart,
Like Marius over Carthage. I depart
From all that life could soothe, or glad, or cheer,
And, hanging from my bleeding breast the dart,
Must wander onward, like the wounded deer,
By many a winding stream, and many a mountain
drear.

The onward road of life, though dark and dreary,
My feet must tread alone—no staff—no arm
To lean upon when I am faint and weary—
No guide to aid my steps, or give alarm
Of secret precipice, or lurking harm ;

But I will climb alone the rugged steep,
And gird my soul to breast the pelting storm—
My senses in eternal beauty steep,
And e'en from cold, dull rocks, the flowers of bliss will
reap.

Aye, ye who've sought to rend earth's holiest claim—
The claim of Love and Honor—ye who've striven
To crush my spirit and to stain my name—
All feelings back upon my heart have driven,
Shall learn how much that heart can lean on
Heaven ;
How far my soul can spread its wings above
The darts ye've aimed—and make the cup ye've
given
To poison my young life, a fount of love,
And from the Ark of Woe soar forth like Noah's dove.

And ye shall learn the might of Purity
To overcome her foes—how she will fight
Till her white banner floats triumphantly ;—
And how the stars—Astarte's limpid light—

Can cheer the soul ye've sought to turn to-night;
And how the grand old woods to me shall talk
Of peace, love, poesy's celestial flight,
While bird, bee, breeze, stream, fount, all woe shall
mock,
And Angels by my side in holy converse walk.

In childhood, came to me a fair Ideal,
And filled my heart with love ecstasial,
Then went and left me to the cold and real;
And from that hour I, sickening, turned from all
That common hearts and common souls enthrall,
And wandered o'er the earth, like Telemaque,
Searching for my beloved in grot and hall—
On land and sea—o'er wild Saharian track,
Filling the air with sighs that should have wooed him
back.

At last, aweary and athirst, I sank
Upon the borders of a gentle stream,
And deep from out the wells of Morpheus drank,
And, while I lay entranced, I dreamed a dream,

Which all too much of happiness did teem.
I dreamed that he I sought and pined for came,
And leant beside me warm as solar beam,
In low tones that electrified my frame,
Rehearsed the story of his never-dying flame.

How he had wandered up and down the earth
In search of me, his spirit's counterpart—
How he had striven to quench the gnawing dearth,
That parched and seared the verdure of his heart—
And how it had defied the skill of art;
How, that aweary of the march of life,
And wistful from all earthly things to part,
He was about to end all mortal strife,
When he beheld me there, my hands with poppies rife.

I dreamed—and yet it did not seem a dream—
Up through my vision flashed realities,
As struggling sunbeams through a vapor gleam,
Giving to phantoms tangibilities;
I felt upon my cheek his burning sighs,
My young blood thrilling to his thrilling themes,

Till, every pulse awake, I oped mine eyes
On the Ideal, sought through all my dreams—
And then our souls embraced like two impetuous
streams.

Now, as aback the mountain vapors roll
Abashed before the ardent eye of Day,
The mists of sorrow melted from my soul,
Beneath the fires of Love's dissolving ray.
No longer shadows on my pathway lay—
No longer tempests overspread the skies—
No longer serpents lurked along my way,
Killing the flowers that promised loveliest dyes—
But earth, air, heaven assumed the hues of Paradise.

It was a second Eden—Paradise Regained—
A world of beatific harmony,
Where ail discordant attributes were chained :—
The millennium of the heart—a cloudless sea
Of love, and intellectuality,
Out of whose depths our thirsting spirits drunk
Of light, and life, and immortality,

Till they became a breathing thought, and sunk
Into one soul—that from all mortal contact shrunk.

He was to me what none had ever been—
A refuge—benediction—Deity,
To which I knelt, and was absolved from sin:—
He was to me what none can ever be—
A star, whose light illumines eternity ;
And thus were we, like two celestial rays
Met on the borders of mortality,
A moment, panting, each on each to gaze,
Ere they commingling blend in one eternal blaze.

I knew no light, but the ethereal light
That emanated from his soul-lit eyes—
They were my sun by day—my stars by night—
The moon to which my heart's full tide did rise—
I knew no music but the harmonies
Of his low voice—no bliss-filled nectary
But his high heart—no perfume but his sighs—
I knew no world, but the unfathomed sea
Of his pure love - no heaven but its eternity.

It boots not how—but I returned at length,
To tread again the ways of earth despised,—
But not the same in mind, or thought, or strength—
My mortal form had been etherealized—
My soul in founts of love had been baptized,
And raised too high for common sympathies
With aught that had not been idealized—
And still, like kite, though bound to earth 't will rise
Into the heavens so high, 't is lost to mortal eyes.

Out of my soul a living soul had flown,
Not as fair Eve from Adam's side upsprung,
To soothe and cheer him in his wanderings lone—
Out of my heart a mighty heart was wrung—
And earth, air, heaven, a lampless chaos swung;
But like the haughty slave, I hug my chain,
And choke the agonies that seek a tongue,
Lock in my silent heart its gnawing pain,
While a volcano sleeps in every throbbing vein.

Notes.

N O T E S .

NOTE 1, PAGE 13.

AUREANA is derived from the Latin word *aura*, meaning a zephyr.

In the winter of 1849-50, a combination of circumstances seemed to conspire, at once, to weaken my faith in my kind. Some crafts which I had fallen in with on the sea of Life, and from whose masts flowed the friendly flag, had proven to be cruisers under false colors. I was in my study when the truth of this broke upon me beyond a doubt. I sank down in an arm-chair, dumb and cold. Then my childhood, with all its truth, its faith, its love, its joys, its aspirations, its hopes—all that I had known of wrong, or felt of grief, or pain, or doubt, or misgiving—all that life is, rushed upon me like the wild waves of the sea.

Twenty-four hours, motionless, with my hands clasped, without food or drink, did I sit thus fixed—and "THE AUREANA" was completed.

Some have surmised that I took my idea from Cole's "VOYAGE OF LIFE," as the Poem and the Painting each contain three separate pictures. Others have been fain to believe that it is the shadowing forth of some personal history. But the one hypothesis has as little truth for its foundation as the other. It has its source in no one circumstance or experience. It is the aggregate of Life—a life-voyage, which the full soul must utter to "*The Wedding Guest*," for I was unconscious of an effort at composition.

An anxious friend took it down in pencil as I told it to the air, in its present and unaltered state.

NOTE 2, PAGE 15.

Horologue; pronounced hör-ô-lôdje. *Walker.*

NOTE 3, PAGE 29.

THE PRISONER OF PEROTÉ.

"The only person that shared the captivity of Santa Anna, in the cold and gloomy prison of Peroté, was his young and beautiful wife, who by a thousand little acts of kindness and affection, soothed his sorrows, and rendered less irksome the horrors of his prison-house.

"The troops of parasites who had fattened upon his bounty, and been loud in their '*ciras*' to his honor in the noon and tide of his power, forgot their benefactor in the night of his adversity, and cried '*death to the tyrant.*' But the affectionate wife clung closer to his bosom, the more the darkness gathered around him, and by her presence and her smiles, lit up the gloom of his dreary abode."—*Translated from a Spanish Paper.*

NOTE 4, PAGE 30.

ANDALUSIA.

The name of Andalusia was applied by the Arabs, not only to the province so called, but to the whole Peninsula.

NOTE 5, PAGE 47.

EMMALINA TO ADHIÉMAR.

The Countess de Die, whom, for the sake of poetry, I have called Emmalina, was one of ten ladies who formed the "*Court of Love*," held at Pierrefen, 1194. She loved and was beloved by the Chevalier Adhiémar. It was not in this case the lover who celebrated the charms of his mistress, but the lady, who, being an illustrious female troubadour, sang the charms of her lover.—*Mrs. Jameson's Loves of the Poets.*

NOTE 6, PAGE 60.

ALRU'BA, OR ALRUCCABA.

The North Polar Star.

Four of these Sonnets were included in my last publication, under the title of *Corinne*. They are here placed with others, under their original and proper title.

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